



February 12, 2014

Dear Senator Beth Bye and Representative Toni Walker and Members of the Committee:

I would like to start off by saying thank you for a budget that is great for children. It represents a significant commitment to early childhood and recognizes the critical importance of access to high quality early learning for children in all settings. The State Funded Child Care Programs are the foundation of the Childcare system in Connecticut and we all appreciate your support for our work over the last forty years.

Riverfront Children's Center along with the rest of the Childcare programs in Connecticut, appreciate the proposed rate increases in the child care subsidy program Care4Kids for Centers and respectfully ask that the budget reflect 3% increase for the total amount of the state and federal part of the grant.

As the Director of Riverfront Children's Center, I believe in the Governor's vision of access to universal pre-K for children in CT and stand ready to assist the Office of Early Childhood and the Governor in planning for the expansion in a manner that builds on the existing early care and education system and strengthens the relationship with the public school system. I understand that the mission and vision of the Office of Early Childhood is to create a comprehensive, coordinated system of early care and education. I do believe that the expansion of access to pre-K will entail new approaches and creative use of existing funds to ensure continued high quality settings and retention of excellent high qualified teachers in all settings. Research is clear that the teacher-child interaction is the single most important component that leads to optimal child outcomes. The Office will help ensure a focus on bringing current disparate programs in public and private settings into one seamless program with the same standards and expectations for child outcomes.

Thank you again for your commitment to children and helping us give them the quality education they need and deserve.

Sincerely,

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